

Some Considerations,

*Humbly offered to the Honourable House of Commons,
concerning the Proposed Repeal of an Act lately Passed
to render the Laws Prohibiting the Importation of
Foreign Bonelace, &c. more Effectual.*

TH E making Bonelace has been an ancient Manufacture of *England*; and the Wisdom of our Parliaments all along thought it the Interest of this Kingdom to prohibit its Importation from Foreign Parts; but the Laws formerly made not proving Effectual, one more strict passed 36 Years since in the 14th of King *Charles II.* which said Act recites, *That great Numbers of the Inhabitants of this Kingdom were then employ'd in making the said Manufacture.*

Since that time the same has encreased to a great Degree, till of late Years, the Art of Smugling being grown to greater Perfection than formerly, larger Quantities of *Flanders-Lace* have been Clândestinely imported, which occasioned the Enforcing of the Former Prohibition Acts by a late One made in the 10th Year of His present Majesty.

This has revived the said Languishing Manufacture, and there are now above One hundred thousand People in *England* who get their Living by it, and Earn by meer Labour Five hundred thousand Pounds a Year, according to the lowest Computation that can be made; and the Persons employed in it, are for the most part Women and Children, who have no other means of Subsistence.

The *English* are now arrived to make as good Lace, in Fineness, and all other respects, as any that is wrought in *Flanders*; and particularly since the late Act so great an Improvement is made that way, that in *Buckinghamshire* the highest prized Lace they used to make was about Eight Shillings per Yard, and now they make Lace there of above Thirty Shillings per Yard; and in *Dorsetshire* and *Devonshire* they now make Lace worth Six Pound per Yard; and in other Places proportionably.

Some of the Dealers in *Flanders-Lace* suggested when the last Act was passing, That by it the Retailers Shops would be Rifled, and they Harassed, and many other Inconveniencies would ensue; none of which have happened, nor have the Shopkeepers now made any Complaint: The Act has only in some Measure answered the honest Intent of it, to Encourage a great Manufacture of our own, and to Discourage Smugglers and Unfair Traders.

If the said Act should now be repealed, it had much better not have been made; for if a Prohibition stand, as by the former Acts it will, and that which should render it Effectual is taken away, all the World will conclude the meaning of the Parliament to be, That the former Acts should be winked at, and the Officers will Act accordingly; And thi-

this will become a Snare to a great many Honest and Industrious People who have Set up and Encouraged the Making of Fine Bone-lace, as well as take away the Livelihood of those who were before in the Trade; and will be the first Instance in *England*, That several Laws remained in Force, and another to render them Effectual was Repealed.

If we shall judge by the same Rules, as in other Matters, and not by the Suggestions of Private Persons concerned in Interest, it will be found, That the late Act about Lace was not the Cause of the Complaint in *Flanders*, nor any Inducement to the Prohibition of our Woollen Manufacture there. It is certain they do not only not give that for any Reason in the Placet which contains the Prohibition, but they expressly give other Reasons for it; as appears by a Copy of the Preamble of the said Placet: The Translation whereof follows.

CHARLES, by the Grace of God, King of Castile, &c. Forasmuch as We are informed by the Great Complaints which are made to Us by several Deputies of Our Cities, who had first heard the General Complaints of the Inhabitants thereof, of the great Quantities of all sorts of Foreign Manufactures that were Vended and Sold in these Parts of Our Dominion, especially the Manufactures of Wool, whereby great part of Our Inland Manufactures are come to nothing, and Our good Subjects, by means thereof, cannot earn their Livings in Our Country, and thereby have been necessitated to retire into other Kingdoms and Countries, where they are detained by sundry Promises, and other Encouragements; which was come so far, as that the said Kingdoms and Countries being now sufficiently provided with Work-people, the Importation of Our Woollen Manufactures into them was Prohibited, and so great Duties laid on the rest, that the said Duties might be esteemed indirectly a Prohibition: All which tends not only to the great Prejudice of Us and Our Subjects, but also to the total Ruin of the Fabricks of these Countries, and particularly of that of the Woollen Manufacture. Wherefore for prevention thereof, and to encourage Our said Subjects to cause the said Woollen Manufactures to Flourish, and to be Re-established in this Country, and with their utmost Zeal to Restore this Fabrick, We, by the Advice, &c.

Then follows the Prohibition, which Forbids all Woollen Manufacture, &c. to be Imported after Six Weeks, and allows Two Years for the Spending what is there.

Hereby it appears,

1. That they have not only Prohibited the Woollen Manufacture from *England*, but from *Holland*, *French Flanders*, and other Parts
2. That the Reason of so doing, was, That some had Prohibited their Woollen Manufactures, and others had laid so great Duties upon other Manufactures of theirs, that it amounted to a Prohibition. Neither of which Reasons can be applied to the late Act about Lace, but to the high Duty upon their Brown Linnens; which is that which they are really aggrieved at, and not the other: For, *First*, their Brown Linnens are in a manner Prohibited thereby: *Secondly*, The Lace which used to come for *England*, is but a small Part of their whole Lace-Trade; for they vend it to *Holland*, *Germany*, *Sweden*, *Denmark*, *France*, *Spain*, *Portugal*,



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Wool, &c. whereas we make it chiefly to serve our own Country and Plantations.

By late Advices from *Flanders*, it is said, That the great Projected Manufacture of Cloth and other Things, are vanished into Smoke, after having been talked of for above Two Years; and that there is a Prospect that the Prohibition would be taken off, and the Trade between them and *England* and *Holland* soon be opened again.

And this they will find Reason to do, lest we should Prohibit their Linnens, which is of more Concern to them than their Lace, the latter being made for the most part by the Nuns. However, the Easing the high Duty on their Brown Linnens, will be an Advantage to them, and no Loss to the Crown in Customs, because little of it can be used now here.

They in *Flanders* have often attempted to recover their Woollen Manufacture; but for many Reasons, which still remain in force, could never accomplish it.

The Lace Manufacture in *England* is the greatest next to the Woollen, and maintains a multitude of People, which otherwise the Parishes must, and that would soon prove a heavy Burthen, even to those Concerned in the Woollen Manufacture.

Wherefore it is humbly hoped, That the Honourable House of COMMONS will be very deliberate in a Matter of such Moment, inasmuch as on the Resolution which shall be taken in this Affair, depends the Well-being or Ruin of numerous Families in their own Country.

Many Laws have been made to set our Poor on Work; and it is hoped none will be made to take away Work from Multitudes who are already Employed.

Here follows an Account of the Numbers of the People in a few Places, which get their Living by Making of Lace, certified by Persons of Reputation; and if there were time to procure the rest, it would appear that there are much above One hundred thousand.

<i>Downton</i>	(<i>Wilts.</i>)	336	<i>Solbery</i>	Dit.	155
<i>Sarum</i>	Ditto	1081	<i>Oving</i>	Dit.	66
<i>Weston Turvill</i>	(<i>Bucks.</i>)	96	<i>Swanburn</i>	Dit.	129
<i>Holton</i>	Ditt.	74	<i>Quainton</i>	Dit.	116
<i>Aylesbury</i>	Ditt.	429	<i>Bow Brickhill</i>	Dit.	140
<i>Buckland Beathong</i>	Ditt.	59	<i>North Crawley</i>	Dit.	403
<i>Drayton Beuchamp</i>	}	Ditt. 69	<i>Fenny Stratford</i>	Dit.	192
<i>Aston Abbots</i>			<i>Alney</i>	Dit.	1322
<i>Hanslop</i>	Dit.	830	<i>Newport Pannell</i>	Dit.	1378
<i>Mursley</i>	Dit.	114	<i>Stony Stratford</i>	Dit.	817
<i>Newnton Longvile</i>	Dit.	153		Dit.	654
<i>Blebbey</i>	Dit.	150	<i>Gancock</i>	Dit.	77
<i>Stoakhamon</i>	Dit.	78	<i>Chard</i>	Dit.	136
<i>Blecheley</i>	Dit.	101	<i>Blandford</i>	Dit.	500
<i>Whitchurch</i>	Dit.	119	<i>Wincanton, and</i>	}	1456
<i>North Marston</i>	Dit.	136	<i>Adjacent Parishes.</i>		
					<i>Sharnon</i>

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Shariton	947	Centun alias Douten (North.)	257
Yeo-vill	711	Little Houghton	Dit. 60
Gittesham	(Devon.) 139	Wellingbrough	Dit. 1146
Calliton	Dit. 353	Wilby	Dit. 69
Coumbraligh	Dit. 65	Earls Barton	Dit. 127
Northleigh	Dit. 32	Etton	Dit. 44
Sidmouth	Dit. 302	Tarcester	Dit. 591
Axmouthe	Dit. 73	Castle Ashby	Dit. 64
Sidbury	Dit. 321	Bracefey	Dit. 154
Buckerall	Dit. 90	Whittlebury	Dit. 206
Farway	Dit. 70	Tardly Hasting	Dit. 442
Mouncton	Dit. 64	Ashton	Dit. 101
Upotery	Dit. 118	Gredon	Dit. 259
Shut and Musbery	Dit. 25	Tring (Hertfordshire)	95
Soumblay	Dit. 45	Lime Regis (Dorsetshire)	404
Fennyton	Dit. 60	Wootten Eytepain	Dit. 48
Branscomb Beare } and Seaton	Dit. 326	Dochester	Dit. 554
Widworthy and Offerell	Dit. 128	Cranfeild (Bedford)	652
Broad Hembury	Dit. 118	Molsee	174
Honyton	Dit. 1341	Charmouth	87
Luppis	Dit. 215	Uplime	41
Axminster	Dit. 60		
Otre St. Mary	Dit. 814		
		In all	23358



The CASE of the
Lacemakers,
In relation to the Importation of Foreign Bone-lace, &c.